



Water Services Advisory Commission

Oasis Water Campus
7070 W. Northern Avenue
October 5, 2016, 6:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Present: Chairman Jonathan Liebman, Vice-chairman Ron Short, Commissioners Robert Gehl and Robin Berryhill

Absent: Commissioners Ruth Faulls and Amber Ford

Staff: Craig Johnson, Ron Serio, Doug Kupel, Dan Hatch, Amanda McKeever, Mark Royce, Karla Camou Guerra, Drew Swieczkowski, Megan Sheldon, Joanne Toms, and Sally Melling Recording Secretary

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Approval of the Final Minutes, September 7, 2016 meeting - Motion for approval made by Vice-Chair. Short, seconded by Comm. Berryhill. **APPROVED 4-0**

IV. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Craig Johnson, P.E., Water Services Director

Mr. Craig Johnson presented a brief update on the department's activities to the Commission. He was pleased to report the Chapter 33 revisions updating water, sewers and sewage disposal, fees, and other billing issues were approved by Council at the September 27, 2016 voting meeting. He gave further information on the Environmental Summit held on September 13 at the Foothills Aquatic Center. He reported that over 50 attendees, including the city manager, from various city departments gathered to share information and brain-storm future plans and solutions.

Mr. Johnson reported that while Glendale didn't take home first place for the AZ Forward nomination for the Glendale Garden Habitat Education Program created by the staff of the Conservation and Sustainable Living group, it is an achievement and an honor to be included in the field of finalists. The project was awarded Honorable Mention, in itself a well-earned mark of recognition.

Mr. Johnson also updated the Commission with the news that the solar-powered street lights along the front drive into Oasis should be in place by the November WSAC meeting. This will reduce our carbon footprint and help the environment.

Comm. Gehl asked for information about the Lake Powell pipeline project. Mr. Johnson stated he had not heard any information on it. Dr. Kupel explained that it has been around for a long time and is one idea as part of a long-term idea in the Navajo and Hopi Tribes settlement to provide water out

of Lake Powell for agriculture pool and non-Indian agricultural users during drought periods. He clarified that this would also bring water into the Flagstaff area and it has always been a possibility but all solutions are coming back around as creative options are discussed. He stated it is not really an anticipated solution.

ACTION: NO ACTION REQUIRED, INFORMATION ONLY

V. PUBLIC PROGRAM OUTREACH SUMMARY

Ms. Joanne Toms, Environmental Program Manager, presented information to the Commission. She began by describing the various handouts that were passed out. She first explained the importance of having a well-recognized brand for the department and pointed to the well-attended annual Touch-a-Truck event that has grown consistently over the years. She expounded the many positives: increases trust, support, and investments; clarifies value and roles; improves communications; reduces negative branding and politics; and helps recruit talent.

Ms. Toms explained that a utility company would want a brand to build a foundation with the community. Negative events and instances would not be viewed as the norm if the reputation is already strongly established as being of providing reliable high quality products and services. Strong support for the Branding and Public Outreach (BPO) committee's efforts comes from the top down and an annual summary is provided to the department's executive staff team. Many new brochures have been developed for community use. Continual efforts are conducted to reach the younger community members in the grade schools with hands-on demonstrations and fun activities. Community workshops are conducted year-round on such subjects as green living methods, low water landscape classes, and vegetable gardens.

The department's information has been brought current with the technical advancements skills by staff to present it in exciting educational formats. The department has a play list on YouTube with 18 videos. The number 1 video watched is on Sanitary Sewer Maintenance by the Wastewater Collections division with Carl Westbrooks, supervisor. On other types of information, technology has helped our information go from flat, black and white photos to 3-D color images conveying the same information. Another format to reach the community is the insert included with every paper water bill. Press releases have also gone out about the dangers of standing water and mosquito-borne West Nile and Zika viruses, the monsoon season, and correctly watering through irrigation systems.

Chairman Liebman asked there are any metrics available on reduced water consumption through the years. Ms. Toms stated that yes the average gallons per day use has dropped significantly since water conservation efforts began in 1985. She also explained that it has been through a combination of increased industry efficiencies and technology, and behavioral changes by the public. She shared that a pre- and post-test test is conducted before such fun and entertaining school events such as the magic and puppet shows put on through staff efforts. The tests ask questions on water and energy vocabulary terms, and water and energy saving efforts to see if learning occurs while having fun.

Comm. Gehl questioned if marketing efforts increase in anticipation of rate increases. Ms. Toms explained that the BPO committee was only established in 2011 and there have been no increases since 2010 but she sees the committee helping with that aspect. Mr. Craig Johnson explained that more information will be presented in the meeting's third item. Information will be presented and a plan will be formulated with input from the Commission to reach the community.

Comm. Berryhill asked if the water bill insert, *the Connection*, is available on-line for those customers that pay their bills through the Internet. Ms. Toms provided instructions on how to locate it. Comm. Berryhill suggested that a link for *the Connection* be placed on water bills for customers. Ms. Amanda McKeever, Water Services Administrator, explained that staff would certainly follow-up on the suggestion since Water Services does not produce the water bills.

ACTION: NO ACTION REQUIRED, INFORMATION ONLY

VI. SUB-REGIONAL OPERATING GROUP

Mr. Ron Serio, Deputy Director, Water Services presented information to the Commission on the Sub-Regional Operating Group or SROG. He explained the partnership of cities formed in 1979 involved for all the parts composing SROG. Several agreements are used to enable the SROG concept to work: the Sewer Interceptors and 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant agreement and the 99th Avenue Interceptor agreement. Various cities partner in this enterprise, share costs and revenues based on their percentage of ownership, and minimize costs by purchasing items with an economy of scale. The city of Phoenix operates and maintains the facilities on behalf of SROG.

Mr. Serio explained that the Sewer Interceptor system receives flows from Glendale, Sun City, Peoria, Phoenix, and Tolleson; however, although the city of Peoria retains ownership in the Sewer Interceptor system, they currently do not use it. Flows from Sun City and Tolleson go to the Tolleson Wastewater Treatment Plant. Peoria built their own sewer treatment plant but wish to have an emergency by-pass plan. He stated that the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant treats flow from Glendale, Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe with a capacity of 230 million gallons per day (mgd). Glendale owns 13.2 mgd of treatment capacity. Metering stations measure flows continually in addition to sampling done twice a month. Fees are determined based on these two figures for each contributing city. He showed an aerial photo of the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant and provided a summary of its history. Glendale does not treat its own sludge, everything is sent to the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant which Mr. Serio explained was a huge benefit on costs.

Cost allocations were then explained. Mr. Serio said that capital expenses are proportionally shared based on owned capacity and operational expenses are proportionally shared based on operational use which is taken from the metering station flow figures and sampling. A third party, Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA), provides administration services. Several SROG committees (each composed of members from each city) provide oversight and management of the agreements.

Mr. Serio explained that several benefits to Glendale have already been mentioned but two others are that a majority of effluent produced is sold to the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Facility with revenue generated \$500,000 this year alone and the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant provides redundancy for the city's West Area Water Reclamation Facility (WAWRF).

Chairman Liebman asked how much our allowed treatment capacity of 13.2 mgd at the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant would increase in the event of a catastrophic event. Mr. Serio said it would be slightly over 14 mgd, so a small amount more than what we currently own. He further explained that should such an event occur, other cities could sell us a small amount of their capacity since no city is using all of their allotted ownership percentage. Chairman Liebman then asked how the AMWUA personnel is determined. Mr. Serio explained they are paid employees. Mr. Johnson further explained that all ten member cities pay an annual fee which is how AMWUA is funded for such work as administrative duties, accounting, lobbying with the legislature, and being an advocate

for both water and wastewater entities. Chairman Liebman then asked how much on an average household bill does using the SROG facilities save a family. Mr. Serio said that the WAWRF does not have the capacity to treat all the waste. It would have to be expanded at a cost of \$20 million to \$30 million in capital building costs and could reach the \$50 million range if a solids handling plant had to be added. He elaborated that just the trains at the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant cost \$200 million per train and each train treats 15 million gallons. Then annual operating costs would then have to be borne by every customer so amounts would be significant and on-going. Mr. Johnson added that costs are spread across the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant and savings as a SROG member are slightly less per gallon than the cost per gallon currently incurred at city facilities. Mr. Serio then confirmed for Chairman Liebman that we can buy more capacity in the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant either from other cities or if plant upgrades are made.

Chairman Liebman asked if the reason why Peoria pulled out was known. Mr. Johnson could only speculate that Peoria was beginning to build so far north that it appeared to be a better business plan to build their own treatment plant. Vice-chairman Short asked if Glendale could ever divert flow to the city of Tolleson reclamation plant if needed. Mr. Johnson stated no, costs are much higher and the effluent/reclaimed water should stay within city limits for city recharge benefit.

Comm. Berryhill asked for more information about the solids handling. She asked if a certain view were leech fields. Mr. Serio explained that they were drying basins and leech fields are associated with septic tank systems.

NO ACTION REQUIRED, INFORMATION ONLY

VII. UPCOMING FINANCIAL PLAN AND RATE STUDY

Mr. Craig Johnson provided information to the Commission on the financial plan and rate study, such as city manager input, anticipated needs and possible direction of the Commission's role. He informed the Commission that a Request for Proposal has gone out for financial analysis, cost of service analysis, and rate study for water and sewer rates. Six submittals are being reviewed by staff of the Finance and Water Services Departments. This is the first rate increase since 2010 and will not be an immediate effect increase.

Mr. Johnson met and explained the Advisory Commissions criteria of advisement to the Council on issues pertaining to water and sewer when asked by Mr. Kevin Phelps, the city manager. Mr. Phelps then asked if they could perhaps expand their scope to include solid waste, landfill fees, and other sanitation-related issues. Mr. Johnson broached a broad outline of projected processes and topics. He explained it will take many meetings once the consultant is selected and then many more with involved groups: home builders' associations, Chamber of Commerce, water zones, and different districts, in addition to any public meetings held.

Chairman Liebman asked what the protocol is going to be in bringing the commissioners up to speed on sanitation topics. Comm. Gehl asked who the public works director is and if they aware of this request. Mr. Johnson explained that the director is Jack Friedline and yes, he is aware and on-board with this request. Chairman Liebman stated he does not want this to dilute the WSAC mission. Mr. Johnson assured the commission that would not be the case. He further explained that when the term "utilities" is considered by the public, it includes sanitation charges for garbage services.

Chairman Liebman stated that he doesn't get a separate sanitation bill to which Mr. Johnson explained it is all contained on the monthly water bill. The unanimous consensus of the members was that they

would be willing to undertake this added task. Mr. Johnson and Ms. McKeever stated that more information, but no final resolution, will be brought to the commission at next month's meeting.

VIII. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

No audience members spoke.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Fats, Oils, and Grease
Water Conservation/Drought
Rate Study Update

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

No Commissioners spoke.

XI. NEXT MEETING: November 2, 2016, 6 p.m.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Chair Short, **seconded** by Comm. Gehl.
MOTION APPROVED 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Melling